

A POSY OF POEMS

Book 8

chosen by
M. Rachhpal
Doris M. Barrow

Delhi

TB-5

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PREFACE

In choosing the poems for the different age-levels, care has been taken to select such poems which would appeal to the imagination and interests of the children, which reflect their thoughts and dreams and which essentially they will enjoy.

Poems have also been included which express the experiences and thoughts of adults 'in memorable speech' but which are easily understood by and are interesting to children. An attempt has been made, wherever possible, to include English verse written by Indians and which have relevance to the Indian environment.

It must be remembered that the tastes and comprehension of individual children vary and this factor has also been taken into consideration in selecting the poems.

A word to teachers: Poetry when mastered is better heard than read.

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M.R.
D.M.B.

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In case of a few poems, the publisher could not trace the author/publishers and contact them. They hope to do so soon.

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1. A NEW SONG

The world waits for a new song,
A glad song, a true song —
A song without the semblance of a tear;
Full of hilltops and the heather
On a day of summer weather,
And a comrade who is infinitely near.

The world waits for a joy-song,
A girl-song, a boy-song —
A song that arrows upward like a lark
Through a sky of rain and thunder,
Till the earth is filled with wonder,
And a sword of sunrise drives away the dark.

Oh, come and sing a day-song,
A hill-song, a way-song —
A song to heal the halt and blind and dumb;
Till they rise to follow after
The wild music of our laughter,
And their glad feet make the murmur
of a drum !

Robert Norwood

2. ^{exchange} BARTER

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up,
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

Sara Teasdale

3. MIRACLES

Why, who makes much of a miracle?
As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,¹
Or dart my sight over the roofs of
 houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the
 beach just in the edge of water,
Or stand under trees in the woods,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the
 hive of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds, or the wonderfulness of
 insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sundown,
 or of the stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of
 the new moon in spring;
These with the rest, one and all are
 to me miracles,
Whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place,
To me every hour of the light and dark
 is a miracle,
Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,
Every square yard of the surface of the
 earth is spread with the same,
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same.
To me the sea is a continual miracle,
The fishes that swim-the-rocks-the motion of the
 waves-the ships with men in them,
What stranger miracles are there?

Walt Whitman

1 in New York

4. EVERYONE SANG

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on; on; and
out of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted,
And beauty came like the setting sun.
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away O but every one
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the
singing will never be done.

Siegfried Sassoon

5. THE BRAHMIN AND THE DAGGER

There lived a king in ancient India once
Who was, indeed, a veritable dunce.
Through years of indolence his mind had grown
To hold no clear conviction of its own.
No judgment, no opinion, since his brain
Forgot to think, and never could again.
And so he had entirely to depend
Upon a Brahmin whom he named his friend.
Whose judgment was his judgment, and whose word
Was law unquestioned. All the city heard
About the power he wielded, and began
To dread this calculating crafty man.
And now the king had soldiers in his state
To fight his battles, — or, at any rate,
To march before him since he loved the warm
And glaring crimson of their uniform.
But then it was entirely out of taste

For soldiers not to carry at their waist
 Expensive daggers, though they might not use them,
 The Brahmin had to judge, select and choose them.
 And this he would not do unless each smith
 Seeking to sell his daggers, bribed him with
 A sum of money which would make men stagger
 More surely than the dearly-purchased dagger.
 Yet, evil has an end, and any wrong
 Repeated, cannot be repeated long.
 And then, one day, a smith appeared at last
 Determined that his dagger shall be passed
 Without a bribe. "I'll match the Brahmin's craft
 With mine I mean it!" said the smith and
 laughed,
 Into the scabbard, to perform the trick,
 He stuffed bright pepper, red as powdered brick.
 "This dagger seems not of the Dagger Tribe,"
 Muttered the Brahmin since there was no bribe
 To lend it quality, "Let me examine
 The weakling weapon closer," quoth the Brahmin.
 Then, with a scornful, self-sufficient smile,
 To test the dagger in his usual style,
 He smelt its steel; when lo! the pepper ran
 Right through the nostrils of this wicked man,
 Who felt his crooked brain begin to reel
 With sneezing, when his nose, striking the steel
 Departed from his face and hit the roof.
 The king remarked, "We need no further proof
 Nor do we further need to test or try it.
 We have decided definitely to buy it."
 Gold coins came pouring forth, as in a myth.
 The Brahmin's nose was gone — so was the smith!

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

6. THE TWINS

In form and feature, face and limb,
 I grew so like my brother,
That folks got taking me for him,
 And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
 It reached an awful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
 Yet not a soul knew which.
One day (to make the matter worse),
 Before our names were fixed,
As we were being washed by nurse
 We got completely mixed;
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree,
 (Or rather nurse's whim),
My brother John got christened me,
 And I got christened him.
This fatal likeness even dogged
 My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogged,
 For John turned out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
 To every one I knew —
What would you do, if you were me
 To prove that you were you?
Our close resemblance turned the tide
 Of my domestic life;
For somehow my intended bride
 Became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
 Absurd mistakes went on:
And when I died — the neighbours came
 And buried brother John.

Henry S. Leigh

7. ADVENTURES OF ISABEL

Isabel, met an enormous bear;
Isabel, Isabel didn't care.
The bear was hungry, the bear was ravenous,
The bear's big mouth was cruel and cavernous.
The bear said, Isabel, glad to meet you,
How do, Isabel, now I will eat you!
Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry,
Isabel, didn't scream or scurry.
She washed her hands and she straightened
her hair up,
Then Isabel quietly ate the bear up.
Once on a night as black as pitch
Isabel met a wicked old witch.
The witch's face was cross and wrinkled,
The witch's gums with teeth were sprinkled,
Ho, ho, Isabel! the old witch crowed,
I'll turn you into an ugly toad.
Isabel, Isabel didn't worry,
Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
She showed no rage and she showed no rancour
But she turned the witch into milk and drank her.
Isabel met a hideous giant,
Isabel continued self-reliant.
The giant was hairy, the giant was horried,
He had one eye in the middle of his forehead.
Good morning, Isabel, the giant said,
I'll grind your bones to make my bread.
Isabel, Isabel didn't worry
Isabel, Isabel didn't scream or scurry.
She nibbled the zwieback that she always fed off.
And when it was gone, she cut the giant's head off.
Isabel met a troublesome doctor
He punched and he poked till he really shocked her

The doctor's talk was of coughs and chills
And the doctor's satchel bulged with the pills.
The doctor said unto Isabel,
Swallow this, it will make you well.
Isabel, Isabel, didn't worry
Isabel, didn't scream or scurry,
She took those pills from the pill-concocter,
And Isabel calmly cured the doctor.

Ogden Nash

8. FATHER WILLIAM

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said,
'And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head —
Do you think, at your age, it is right?'

'In my youth,' Father William replied to his son,
'I feared it might injure the brain;
But now I am perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-saumersault in at the door—
Pray, what is the reason of that?'

'In my youth,' said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
 'I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of ointment — one shilling the box —
Allow me to sell you a couple?'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'and your jaws are
too weak

For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the
beak

Pray, how did you manage to do that?

'In my youth,' said his father, 'I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.'

'You are old,' said the youth, 'one would hardly
suppose

That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eal on the end of you nose —
What makes you so awfully clever?'

'I have answered three questions, and that is enough,'
Said the father, 'don't give your self airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!'

Lewis Carroll

9. LITTLE LOST PUP

He was lost! — not a shade of doubt of that;
For he never barked at a slinking cat,
But stood in the square where the wind blew raw
With drooping ear and a trembling paw
And a mournful look in his pleading eye
And a plaintive sniff at the passer-by
That begged as plain as a tongue could sue,
'O Mister! please may I follow you?'
A lorn, wee waif of a tawny brown
A drift in the roar, of a headless town —
Oh, the saddest of sights in a world of sin
Is a little lost pup with his tail tucked in!

Well, he won my heart (for I set great store
On my own red Bute — who is here no more).
So I whistled clear, and he trotted up
And none so glad as that small lost pup;
Now he shares my board, and he owns my bed,
And he fairly shouts when he hears my tread;
Then if things go wrong, as they sometimes do
And the world is cold and I'm feeling blue,
He asserts his right to assuage my woes
With a warm red tongue and a nice, cold nose
And a silky head on my arm or knee
And a paw as soft as a paw can be.

When we rove the woods for a league about,
He's as full of pranks as a school let out
For he romps and frisks like a three-months' colt,
And he runs me down like a thunder bolt.
Oh, the blithest of sights in the world so fair
Is a gay little pup with his tail in the air!

Arthur Guiterman

10. THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold
And the sheen of their spears was like stars
on the sea,

When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,

That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heav'd, and
for ever were still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide
But through it there roll'd not the breath
of his pride;

And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail,
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the windows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Lord Byron

11. DISARMAMENT

“Put up the sword!” The voice of Christ once more
Speaks in the pauses of the cannon’s roar.
O’er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; over cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through words of foe
Down which a growing diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons,
Of desolate women in their far-off homes
Waiting to hear the step that never comes!
Oh men and brothers! let that voice be heard
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword.
Fear not the end. There is a story told
In Eastern tents, when Autumn nights grow cold
And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
With grave responses listening unto it;
Once on the errands of his mercy bent
Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look
Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook.
Oh son of peace! the giant cried, “Thy fate
Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate.”
The unarmed Buddha looking, with no trace
Of fear or anger, in the monster’s face
In pity said, “Poor fiend, even thee I love.”
Lo! as he spake, the sky-tall terror sank
To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
Into the form and fashion of a dove;
And where the thunder of its rage was heard.
Circling above him sweetly sang the bird:
“Hate hath no harm for love” so ran the song,
“And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!”

John Greenleaf Whittier

12. THE FINAL LESSON

I have sought beauty through the dust of strife,
I have sought meaning for the ancient ache,
And music in the grinding wheels of life;
Long have I sought, and little found as yet
Beyond this truth: that love alone can make
Earth beautiful, and life without regret!

Arthur Stringer

13. WHY IS THERE WAR?

I looked up and saw the sky,
Specked with birds flying free
I looked around and saw the world,
Drenched in peace and beauty.
Oh!, how I longed to hold this moment,
And let it last eternally.

Yet present will fade to future,
One knows not what lies ahead,
I looked at the graves of the soldiers
Who lay there, dead.
Little did they know that the drums of wars,
Would call them far away,
Little did they guess their own blood would soak
The land where they used to stay.
Hatred and jealousy kindled within their hearts,
For the millions of sufferers none spared a tear
None cared for the ruined nature around them,
Even death was not their fear.
Man saw the suffering all around him,
He saw large nations crumble and fall,
Yet not a moment in his madness
Did he realize he was ruining himself
For nothing at all.

When the war ends,
And the harm is already done,
When millions have suffered,
And the peace and beauty all has gone,
Man asks his usual question,
Why is there war?
Its answer all men crave to know,
And may be when answered one day
War will end just to remain as bitter memory,
There shall be peace again,
And every nation will be free.

14. THEIR FEELINGS

I cannot know how they felt —
Those who fell at Vimy and Verdun,
Those who crawled, and fought, and died
With the sound of each booming gun.
I cannot know how they felt,
How they looked, and what they thought
When they charged, and stopped, and fell
On the ground where they had fought.
I cannot know how they felt,
When they read their mail from home,
When they smiled or burned in anger,
Or when a young man found that he was alone,
Without a friend in all the world.
I cannot know how they felt
When they heard the order, "Over the top!"
When they blindly charged into solid walls of bullets,
And flopped, or staggered, or stumbled
To a bloody, dying stop.
I cannot know how their loved ones felt
When they read the words "regretfully
inform."

Killed in action."

What they thought, and how they took it,
What they did, if anything
I cannot know the feelings of war,
What it's like to live like this,
I've never known the hate and misery;
With futility I can only hope — that I never will.

15. IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:
If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold one when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common
touch.

If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

16. IT IS NOT GROWING LIKE A TREE

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make men better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere:

A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light.
In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

Ben Jonson

17. AN EASTERN PROVERB

He who knows and knows he knows,
He is a wise man: seek him.
He who knows and knows not he knows,
He is asleep: wake him.
He who knows not and knows he knows not,
He is a child: teach him.
He who knows not and knows not he knows not,
He is a fool: shun him.

18. MIHR-UN-NISSA, QUEEN OF WOMEN

Long ago, so runs the story, in the days of King Akbar,
'Mid the pearly-tinted splendours of Paradise Bazar,
Young Jehangir, boyish-hearted, playing idly with his
dove,
Lost his boyhood, lost his favourite, lost his heart,
and found his love.
By a fretted marble fountain, set in 'broidery of
flowers,
Sat a girl, half-child, half-maiden, dreaming o'er
coming hours.
Wondering vaguely, yet half guessing, what the harem
women mean
When they call her fair, and whisper, 'You are
born to be a queen.'
Arched and fringed with velvet blackness from their
shady depths her eyes
Shine as summer-lightning in the dusky evening skies.
Mihir-un-Nissa, Queen of Women, so they call the
little maid
Dreaming by the marble fountain where but yester-
day she played.
Heavy sweet the creamy blossoms gem the burnished
orange groves,
Through their shade comes Prince Jehangir, on his
wrist two fluttering doves.
'Hold my birds, child!' cries the stripling,
'I am tired of their play,'
Thrusts them in her hands, unwilling,
careless saunters on his way.

Culling posies as he wanders from the flowers rich
and rare,
Heedless that the fairest blossom 'mid the blaze of
blossom there
Is the little dreaming maiden by the fountain side
at rest
With the orange-eyed, bright plumaged birds of love
upon her breast.
Flowers fade and perfume passes; nothing pleases
long today;
Back toward his feathered fav'rites soon the Prince's
foot-steps stray.
Dreaming still sits Mihr-un-Nissa, but within her
listless hold
Only one vain-struggling captive does the lad,
surprised, behold!
'Only one?' he queries sharply. 'Sire', she falters,
'one has flown!
'Stupid! How?' The maiden flushes at his quick
imperious tone.
'So! my lord!' she says defiant, with a curving lip, and
straight
From her unclasped hands the other circling flies to
join its mate.
Heavy sweet the creamy blossom gems the burnished
orange tree,
Where the happy doves are cooing o'er their new
found liberty.
Startled by her quick reprisal, wrath is lost in blank
surprise,

Silent stands the heir of Akbar, gazing with
awakening eyes
At the small rebellious figure, with its slender arms
outspread,
Face half frowns, half laughter, royal right of
maidenhead.
Slowly dies the flush of anger as the flush of evening
dies,
Slowly grow his eyes to brightness as the stars in
evening skies.
'So, my lord!' So Love had flitted from the listless
hand of Fate,
And the heart of young Jehangir, like the dove, had
found its mate.

Flora Annie Steel

19. THE LAST BARGAIN

"Come and hire me," I cried, while in the morning
I was walking on the stone-paved road.

Sword in hand, the King came in his chariot.
He held my hand and said, "I will hire you with my
power,"

But his power counted for naught, and he went away
in his chariot.

In the heat of the mid-day the houses stood with shut
doors.

I wandered along the crooked lane.

An old man came out with his bag of gold.

He pondered and said, "I will hire you with my
money."

He weighed his coins one by one, but I turned away.

It was evening. The garden hedge was all aflower.

The fair maid came out and said, "I will hire you
with a smile."

Her smile paled and melted into tears, and she went
back alone into the dark.

The sun glistened on the sand, and the sea waves
broke waywardly.

A child sat playing with shells.

He raised his head and seemed to know me and said,
"I hire you with nothing."

From henceforward that bargain struck in child's
play made me a free man.

Rabindranath Tagore

20. BANGLE-SELLERS

Bangle-sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair.
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow-tinted circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,
Silver and blue as the mountain-mist,
Some are flushed like the buds that dream
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream;
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves
To the limpid glory of new-born leaves.

Some are like fields of sunlit corn,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage-fire
Or rich with the hue of her heart's desire;
Thinking, luminous, tender, and clear;
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

Some are purple and gold-flecked grey,
For her who has journeyed through life midway,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast;
Who serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

Sarojini Naidu

21. A RAJPUT NURSE

'Whose tomb have they builded, Vittoo, under this
tamrind tree,
With its door of the rose-veined marble, and white
dome stately to see,
Was he holy Brahman, or Yogi, or Chief of the Rajput
line,
Whose urn rests here by the river, in the shade of the
beautiful shrine?'

'May it please you,' quoth Vittoo, salaaming, 'Protector
of all the poor,
It was not for holy Brahman, they carved that delicate
door;
Nor for Yogi, nor Rajput Rana, built they this gem
of our land;
But to tell of a Rajput woman, as long as the stones
should stand.

'Her name was Moti, the pearl-name, 'twas far in the
ancient times;
But her moon-like face and her teeth of pearl are
sung of still in our rhymes;
And because she was young, and comely, and of good
repute, and had laid
A babe in the arms of her husband, the Palace-Nurse
she was made:

'For the sweet chief-queen of the Rana in Joudhpore
city had died,
Leaving a motherless infant, the heir of that race of
pride:
The heir of the peacock-banner, of the five-coloured
flag, of the throne,
Which traces its record of glory from the days when
it ruled along;

'From times when, forth from the sunlight, the first
of our kings came down,
And had the earth for his footstool, and wore the
stars for his crown,
As all good Rajputs have told us; so Moti was proud
and true,
With the Prince of the land on her bosom, and her
own brown baby too.

'And the Rajput women will have it (I know not my-
self of these things)
As the two babes lay on her lap there, her lord's and
the Joudhpore king's;
So loyal was the blood of her body, so fast the faith
of her heart,
It passed to her new-born infant, who took of her
trust its part.

'He would not suck of the breast-milk till the Prince
had drunken his fill;
He would not sleep to the cradle-song till the Prince
was lulled and still;
And he lay at night with his small arms clasped round
the Rana's child,
As if those hands like the rose-leaf could shelter from
treason wild.

'For treason was wild in the country, and villainous
men had sought
The life of the heir of the gadi, to the Palace in secret
brought
With bribes to the base, and with knife-thrusts for the
faithful they made their way
Through the line of the guards, and the gateways, to
the hall, where the women lay.

'There Moti, the foster-mother, sat singing the
children to rest,
Her baby at play on her crossed knees, and the King's
son held to her breast;
And the dark slave-maidens round her beat low on
the cymbal's skin
Keeping the time of her soft song—when—Saheb—
there hurried in

'A breathless watcher, who whispered, with terror in
eyes and face:
"Oh, Moti, men come to murder my Lord the Prince
in this place !
They have bought the help of the gate-guards, or
slaughtered them unawares,
Hark ! that is the noise of their tulwars, the clatter
upon the stairs.

'For one breath she caught her baby from her lap to
her heart, and let
The King's child sink from her nipple, with lips still
clinging and wet,
Then tore from the Prince his head-cloth, and the
putta of pearls from his waist,
And bounded the belt on her infant, and the cap on
his brows, in haste.

'And laid her own dear offspring, her flesh and blood,
on the floor,
With the girdle of pearls around him, and the cap
that the King's son wore;
While close to her heart, which was breaking, she
folded the Raja's joy,
And—even as the murderers lifted the purdah—she
fled with his boy.

'But there (so they deemed) in his jewels, lay the
 Chota Rana the Heir;
 "The cow with two calves has escaped us," cried one;
 "it is right and fair,
 She should save her own butcha; no matter! the edge
 of the dagger ends
 This spark of Lord Raghoba's sunlight; stab thrice
 and four times, O friends."
 'And the Rajput women will have it (I know not if
 this can be so)
 That Moti's son in the putta and golden cap cooed low,
 When the sharp blades met in his small heart, with
 never one moan or wince,
 But died with a babe's light laughter, because he
 died for his Prince.
 'Thereby did that Rajput mother preserve the line of
 our kings.'
 'Oh, Vittoo,' I said, 'but they gave her much gold
 and beautiful things,
 And garments, and land for her people, and a home
 in the Palace. May be
 She had grown to love that Princeling even more
 than the child on her knee.'
 'May it please the Presence,' quoth Vittoo, 'it seemed
 not so. They gave
 The gold and the garment and jewels, as much as the
 proudest would have;
 But the same night deep in her true heart she buried
 a knife, and smiled,
 Saying this: "I have saved my Rana, I must go to
 suckle my child."

Sir Edwin Arnold

22. THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Playing her needle and thread —
Stitch! Stitch! Stitch!
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the 'Song of the shirt'.

'Work-work-work!
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work-work-work!
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset and band
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the bottoms I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

O! Men with Sisters dear!
O! Men with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch-stitch-stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A shroud as well as a shirt.

'Work-work-work!
My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread and rags.
The shatter'd roof,—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

'Work-work-work !
In the dull December light,
And work-work-work !
When the weather is warm and bright —
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their gunny backs
And twit me with spring,
'O ! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet ! —
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet;
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal'

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —
Stitch ! Stitch ! Stitch !
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch —
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!
She sang this 'Song of the Shirt'

Thomas Hood

23. MORNING EXPRESS

Along the wind-swept platform, pinched and white,
The travellers stand in pools of wintry light,
Offering themselves to morn's long, slanting arrows.
The train's due; porters trundle laden barrows.
The train steams in, volleying resplendent clouds
Of sun-blown vapour. Hither and about,
Scared people hurry, storming the doors in crowds.
The officials seem to waken with a shout,
Resolved to hoist and plunder; some to the vans
Leap; others rumble the milk in gleaming cans.
Boys, indolent-eyed, from baskets leaning back,
Question each face; a man with a hammer steals
Stopping from coach to coach; with clang and clack
Touches and tests, and listens to the wheels.
Guard sounds a warning whistle, points to the clock
With brandished flag, and on his folded flock
Clasps the last door; the monster grunts: 'Enough!
Tightening his load of links with pant and puff.
Under the arch, then forth into blue day,
Glide the processional windows on their way,
And glimpse the stately folk who sit at ease
To view the world like kings taking the seas
In prosperous weather: drifting banners tell
Their progress to the countries; with them goes
The clamour of their journeying: while those
Who sped them stand to wave a last farewell.

Siegfried Sassoon

24. BHARAT

On the shores of Bharat
Where men of all races have come together,
Awake, O my Mind !
Standing here with outstretched arms,
I send my salutations to the God of Humanity.
And in solemn chant sing His praises.
At whose call no one knows,
Came floating streams of men
And merged into the sea of Bharat
The Aryan, the Non-Aryan, the Dravidian,
The Huns, the Pathans, and the Mughuls —
They all have merged here into one body,
Today the West has opened its doors,
And from thence come gifts.
Giving and taking
All will be welcome on the shores of Bharat,
When men of all races have come together.
Come, O Aryan and Non-Aryan,
Hindu and Muslim,
Come, O English and you Christian,
Come, O Brahmin,
Purify your mind and clasp the hands of all;
Come, O downtrodden,
And let vanish all burdens of your humiliation.
Tarry not, but come you all
To annoint the Mother,
On the shores of Bharat,
Where men of all races have come together.

Rabindranath Tagore

25. NO MEN ARE FOREIGN

Remember, no men are strange, no countries foreign,
Beneath all uniforms, a single body breathes
Like ours; the land our brothers walk upon
Is earth like this, in which we all shall lie.

They, too, aware of sun and air and water,
Are fed by peaceful harvests, by war's long winter
starv'd

Their hands are ours, and in their lines we read
A labour not different from our own.

Remember they have eyes like ours that wake
Or sleep, and strength that can be won
By love. In every land is common life
That all can recognise and understand.

It is the human earth that we defile,
Our hells of fire and dust outrage the innocence
Of air that is everywhere our own.

Remember, no man are foreign, and no countries
strange.

James Kirkup

26. I DREAM A WORLD

I dream a world where man
No other will scorn
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth,
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head,
And joy, like a pearl,
Attend the needs of all mankind.
Of such I dream—
Our world.

Langston Hughes

27. UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Earth has not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
This City now doth like a garment wear.
The beauty of the morning; silent bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill;
 saw I, never felt a calm so deep!
 the river glideth at his own sweet will:
 or God: the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

W. Wordsworth

28. SILENCE

There is a silence where hath been no sound;
There is a silence where no sound may be;
In the cold grave, under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert, where no life is found
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound.
No voice is hushed, no life treads silently;
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground.

But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun ox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo and the low winds moan,
There the true silence is, self conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood

29. MEDLEY (*A Kashmiri Song*)

The poppy grows on the roof-top,
The iris flowers on the grave;
Hope in the heart of a lover,
And fear in the heart of a slave.
The opal lies in the river,
The pearl in the ocean's breast;
Doubt in a grieving bosom,
And faith in a heart at rest.
Fireflies dance in the moon-light,
Peach-leaves dance in the wind;
Dreams and delicate fancies
Dance thro' a poet's mind.
Sweetness dwells in the beehive,
And lives in a maiden's breath;
Joy in the eyes of children
And peace in the hands of Death.

Sarojini Naidu

30. REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away;
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned;
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember me and be sad.

C. G. Ross *tag*

31. COROMANDEL FISHERS

Rise, brothers, rise, the wakening
 skies pray to the morning light
The wind lies asleep in the arms of the dawn
 like a child that has cried all night.
Come, let us gather our nets from the
 shore and set our catamarans free
To capture the leaping wealth of the
 tide, for we are the sons of the sea.
No longer delay, let us hasten away in
 the track of the sea gull's call,
The sea is our mother, the cloud is our
 brother, the waves are our comrades all.
What though we toss at the fall of the
 sun where the hand of the sea-god drives?
He holds the storm by the hair, will hide
 in his breast our lives.
Sweet is the shade of the coconut glade,
 and the scent of the mango grove,
And sweet are the sands at the fall of
 the moon with the sound of the voices we love,
But sweeter, O brothers, the kiss of the
 spray and dance of the wild foam's glee
Row, brother, row, to the blue of the
 verge, where the low sky mates with the sea.

Sarojini Naidu

32. TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?
While I am lying on the grass
 Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass
 At once far off, and near.
Though babbling only to the Vale,
 Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
 Of visionary hours.
Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
 Even yet thou art to me
No Bird, but an invisible thing,
 A voice, a mystery;
The same whom in my school-boy days
 I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
 In bush, and tree, and sky.
To seek thee did I often rove
 Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
 Still longed for, never seen.
And I can listen to thee yet;
 Can lie upon the plain
And listen till I do beget
 That golden time again.
O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
 Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place;
 That is fit home for Thee!

W. Wordsworth.

33. THE FLUTE PLAYER OF BRINDABAN

Why didst thou play the matchless flute
 Neath the Kadamba tree,
And wound my idly dreaming heart
 With poignant melody,
So where thou goest I must go,
 My flute-player, with thee?

Still must I like a homeless bird
 Wander, forsaking all;
The earthly loves and wordly lures
 That held my life in thrall,
And follow, follow, answering
 Thy magical flute-call.

To Indra's golden-flowering groves
 Where streams immortal flow,
Or to sad Yama's silent Courts
 Engulfed in lampless woe,
Where'er thy subtle flute I hear
 Beloved I must go !

No peril of the deep or height
 Shall daunt my winged foot;
No fear of time-unconquered space,
 Or light untravelled route,
Impede my heart that pants to drain
 The nectar of thy flute !

Sarojini Naidu

34. THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting
flowers,

From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that
waken

The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's
breast,

As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;

Over earth and ocean with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,

Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,

Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight freezes strewn;

And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,

Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer,
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm river, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and the shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their
 convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost
 from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

35. LEISURE

What is this life, if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep and cows.

No time to see when woods we pass
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see in broad daylight
Streams full of stars like skies at night.

~~No time to turn at Beauty's glance~~
~~Streams full of stars like skies at night.~~

No time to turn at Beauty's glance
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this, if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. Davies

36. NOVEMBER

No sun-no moon;
No morn-no noon
No dawn—no dust—no proper time of day.
No sky—no earthly view
No distance looking blue.
No road—no street—no “t’other
sides of the way”.
No end to any Row
No indications where the Crescents go.
No top to any steeple
No recognitions of familiar people
No courtesies for showing ‘em
No knowing ‘em !
No travelling at all—no locomotion,
No inkling of the way—no notion
“No go”—by land or ocean.
No mail—no post
No news from any foreign coast
No park—no Ring—no afternoon
gentility
No company—no nobility.
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves—no birds
November !

Thomas Hood

37. ON THE EVE OF NEW YEAR

Farewell, old year!
The last sunset shall see you tonight,
Fading into the mist of time,
Lost forever, in that ever-churning whirl-pool,
Never to return again.

Remorse fills me tonight,
As you slip away,
For with the many years that shall pass,
Will flee my childhood days;
I want to hold you,
To keep you eternal—
Yet must you fly away?
So then, Goodbye. . . .
But not goodbye forever,
For I can never abandon you,
And there in my memory
You shall always remain,
Forever, eternally there.

Welcome, New Year!
The first rays of golden sun,
Shall herald your new arrival;
Come then, and start a new chapter of my life,
And I shall fill with all lost
In the year that passed before.
You are like spring that fills a branch
With leaves all fresh,
Leaves that will bloom and grow
Prettier far than those that bloomed in the year
before.
Come, I shall enjoy you till you last,
And drink from the brimmed cup of life
you will offer me,

This time I shall drink to the last drop,
And grant all that you have to give me.
I know not what the future holds,
Yet I shall mould this future
Far, far better than what it was before.
So welcome
Let winter melt behind you,
And like spring anew the world,
On this happy new year.

Extracts from the plays of William Shakespeare

38. From *The Merchant of Venice*

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest —
To blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of Kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of Kings,
It is an attribute to God himself.
And earthly power then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice

38 (a) From *As You Like It*

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling, and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like a snail
Unwillingly to school.
And then the lover,
Sighing like a furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then, a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then, the justice,
In fair round belly, with good lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances,
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side,
His youthful hose well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble pipes
And whistles in his sound last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness mere oblivion
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

38 (b) From *Hamlet*

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act:
Be thou familiar; but by no means vulgar:
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul, with hoops of steel:
But do not dull my palm, with entertainment
Of each unhatch'd, unfledg'd, comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear; but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure: but reserve thy judgement:
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy;
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous chief in that,
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend:
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all; to thine ownself be true:
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

39. THE NIGHTINGALE

There lived a Chinese Emperor
 (Oh, very long ago !)
In a palace built of porcelain
 As white as driven snow ;
And on its walls were painted,
 In colours bright and gay,
Rare birds that never sang a song
 And never flew away !

But past the royal gardens,
 In a forest by the sea,
There dwelt a little Nightingale,
 Which sang delightfully.
'What is this bird ?' the Emperor cried,
 'That causes such a fuss ?'
Command it to appear at court
 And sing its song to us !

And when the little Nightingale
 Sang from a golden perch,
The courtiers listened silently,
 As if they were in church ;
And down their master's royal cheek
 They watched a tear-drop fall ;
And knew he wept for pure delight,
 And not for grief at all.

The bird was made 'Court Chorister,'
 But might go home each day,
(Although they held it by a string,
 Lest it should fly away).

One day the Emperor received
A present from a King—
A clockwork bird. They wound it up,
And it would really sing.

Its outspread wings were made of gold
Spangled with rubies red,
It wore a crown of diamonds
Upon its tiny head.
They wound it up, and wound it up,
And listened night and day ;
So the little living Nightingale
Unnoticed flew away.

And then one day the clockwork bird,
In the middle of a song,
Stopped all at once, and went
Whir-r-r !

Its clockwork had gone wrong !
And nobody could mend the thing,
However much they tried ;
So in a cupboard, on a shelf,
The bird was laid aside.

Years passed; the Emperor fell ill,
And, as he tossed in pain,
Sighed ' If my Nightingale would sing,
I should get well again.'
But all the doctors stood around
Shaking their heads in sorrow,
For they believed the Emperor
Would surely die to-morrow.

When it was whispered far and wide,
 'The Emperor's very ill.'
The Nightingale heard too, and cried
 'I bear him no ill-will ;
I'll go and sing my sweetest song
 Upon his window-sill.'

And when the courtiers crept back
 In fear, as day was dawning,
The Emperor sat up in bed,
 And wished them all
 'Good Morning.'

C. D. Cole

22